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SHEPTON MALLET
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year ending 31st December, 1949

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SHEPTON MALLET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH:

T. E. COULSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.E.

SANITARY INSPECTORS:

G. F. HAWKINS, Cert. S.I. Jt. Board Cert. R.S.I. (Meat & Other Foods). (Senior).

M. D. Watson, Cert. R.S.I. Jt. Board Cert. R.S.I. (Meat & Other Foods). (Additional).

CLERK:

A. D. STOCKDALE.

WINCANTON,

SOMERSET.

June, 1950.

TO THE

SHEPTON MALLET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MISS HILL AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1949.

1—.GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	2278
Population (1949)	4770
Number of Inhabited Houses (1949)	1308
Rateable Value	£25,578
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated)	£106

Number of Inhabited Houses is based on the following :—

Dwelling Houses	1199
Prison Houses	6
Houses and Shops	75
Hotels and Inns	22
Clubs with Living Accommodation	2
Agricultural Dwelling Houses	22
Total	1326
Less voids (estimated)	18
	1308

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

In addition to shops, offices, building trades and allied trades, the main sources of employment in the town are cider factories (2), breweries (2), Shoe-making, glove factories (2), millers, bacon factory and meat products, railways (2), agricultural engineering, research chemists, general engineering (2), garages and motor engineering, dry-cleaning and dye-works, rope works, motor haulage.

There is very little unemployment other than that of a transitory nature.

2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

BIRTHS.

Live Births :—	Males.	Females.	
Total	51	32	
Legitimate	49	29	
Illegitimate	2	3	Birth Rate :—16.7 per 1,000.
Still Births :—	**Males.**	**Females.**	
Total	2	0	
Legitimate	2	0	
Illegitimate	0	0	Birth Rate :—0.39 per 1,000.

DEATHS.

	Total.	Males.	Females.	
Deaths from all causes	54	25	29	Death Rate :—11.7 per 1,000.

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth :—

(a) From Sepsis	0
(b) From other causes	0

Deaths of Infants under One Year of age :—

Legitimate, 1 ; Illegitimate, 0 ; Total, 1.

Deaths of Infants under One Week	1
,, ,, ,, from One to Four Weeks	0
,, ,, ,, from One to Six Months	0
,, ,, ,, from Six to Twelve Months	0
Total	1

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
,, ,, Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
,, ,, Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	0

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

The total number of Deaths occurring in the District was 54, compared with 45 in 1948.

The chief causes of death were :—

Cancer	5
Heart and Circulatory Diseases	20
Old Age	4
Cerebral Haemorrhage	15

In all " Causes of Death " :—

Those dying between the ages of 75 and 80 were	17
,, ,, ,, ,, 81 and 85 were	9
,, ,, ,, ,, 86 and 90 were	4
Those dying above the age of 90 were	1

A total of 31 or 57.40% of the total Deaths.

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Diseases	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Dysentery	1	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis	2	1	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Scarlet Fever	2	3	0
Pneumonia (all forms)	0	0	3
Whooping Cough	3	0	0
Measles	2	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	0	0
Tuberculosis :—Total	9	0	4
(a) Respiratory	8	0	4
(b) Non-Respiratory	1	0	0

The notification of Infectious Diseases in the District by Medical Practitioners was satisfactory, except in cases of Pneumonia and Scarlet Fever.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

No. Notified.	Cases Treated At Home.	Cases Treated In Hospital.	Vision Unimpaired.	Vision Impaired.	Total Blindness.	Deaths.
1	—	1	1	—	—	—

4.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

Pneumonia caused 3 deaths.

Cases of Tuberculosis are more in number compared with 1947. We hope and believe that they will be reduced when the Council's Housing Programme has been completed, and when more beds are available in Sanatoria, both of which will tend to reduce the number of contact cases.

5.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE DISTRICT.

A.—Professional Nursing in the Home.

(1) General : There are 2 Nurses in the District engaged in general district work, who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association.

(2) For Infectious Diseases :—Some of the cases of infectious diseases were removed to Isolation Hospitals, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the District.

B.—Midwives.

There are 2 Certified Midwives practising in the District.

C.—Clinics and Treatment Centres.

There is one Tuberculosis Dispensary in Charlton Road, provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—Hospitals Available for the District.

(1) Tuberculosis : None.
(2) Fever : None.
(3) Other : Some unused buildings in the grounds of the former Isolation Hospital have been converted into a Hospital for the aged sick.

There is one District Hospital at Shepton Mallet for the treatment of general medical and surgical cases. There is no Public Assistance Institution, the building having been taken over by The County Council as an Institution for persons suffering from Mental Deficiency.

E.—Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers and Illegitimate Infants : None.

Homeless Children : Hillworth House, staffed and equipped by the Somerset County Council.

F.—Ambulance Facilities.

(1) For Infectious Cases :—None.

(2) For Non-Infectious Cases and Accidents :—A Motor Ambulance is kept at the Wells Road Garage, Shepton Mallet, Telephone 126 ; and in case of need additional ambulances are obtainable through the local branch of the B.R.C.S. and also from Wells and Radstock.

G.—Scabies :—No cases of Scabies have been reported to me.

6.—LABORATORY WORK.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at The Public Health Laboratory, Taunton ; considerable use of this Laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept at Messrs. Boots (Chemists), and Miss Watkins (Chemist). Supplies can be obtained from them by Practitioners on the National Health Service prescription form.

7.—PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing and Sanitary Surveyor, and additional Sanitary Inspector (both whole-time officers) and myself (a part-time officer). There is one Health Visitor in the District.

8.—WATER SUPPLY.

Practically the whole of the dwellinghouses in the Urban District are supplied with a piped supply of water from the mains of the Shepton Mallet Waterworks Company.

During the year, the supply has been satisfactory in quantity but the supply was restricted during the summer months. In consequence of the dry weather, the Waterworks Authority issued regular notices, through the medium of the local press, urging consumers to economise in the use of mains water. For some time, the supply to the houses in the Downside area at the northern end of the District was shut off at night in order to conserve supplies and from time to time the mains were shut off at night time in other parts of the town.

So far as is known, no bacteriological examinations were made of the raw water but 12 (twelve) samples were taken of the treated water at various points of supply throughout the district. Ten of these samples gave B. Coli Nil counts ; two samples resulted in counts of 1 B. Coli per 100 ml, but no explanation is available to account for same.

The water is not thought to have any plumbo-solvent action.

No information is available regarding any contamination of the source of supply.

It is estimated that approximately 16 (sixteen) properties in outlying parts of the Urban District are not supplied with mains water.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no public stand-pipes, but a few houses are supplied by communal taps.

A large Bacon Factory has its own well in addition to a mains supply ; a sample of water from this well was taken during the year and found very satisfactory.

Samples were taken from three wells supplying three cottages and one farm property and, as a result of unsatisfactory reports, the respective owners have been requested to provide a proper supply, preferably from the mains.

Several small mains extensions are in hand, principally in connection with the development of the Council's Housing Estate at Ridgeway. The loop main, from West Shepton via Hitchen Lane to Ridgeway, referred to in the report for 1948, has not yet been laid, but it is expected that the work will shortly be put in hand.

It is understood that, as part of a long-term policy, arrangements are being made for the interconnection of the Waterworks Company's mains and those of the Shepton Mallet Rural District Council, involving bulk supply and reciprocal schemes.

9.—SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

There have been no changes during the year. No extensions are under consideration other than those which may be necessitated by future housing developments.

10.—CAMPING SITES.

No applications for licences have been received for camping sites or moveable dwellings.

The premises known as Cook's Paddock are from time to time used for caravans in conjunction with travelling circuses and amusement fairs, but their stay is usually very short. Gipsy caravans also encamp occasionally on a roadside verge on the fringe of the district.

11.—HOUSING.

	Houses erected during year.		Houses in course of erection.				Conversions to Flats or Dwellings.	Temporary (Army Huts etc.)
	Perm.	Temp.	Permanent.			Temp.		
			Trad.	N.T.	Total.			
By Local Authority	29	—	7	16	23	—	—	—
By Private Enterprise	2	—	1	—	1	—	1	—
Totals	31	—	8	16	24	—	1	—

The dwellings completed by the Local Authority include 19, each having three bedrooms, and four each having four bedrooms.

The figure given under the Column "Conversions" relates to the additional number of housing units provided and comprises: the adaptation of part of a building not previously used for human habitation.

The 16 Non-Traditional houses in course of erection at the 31st December form part of a contract for the erection of 24 Cornish Unit two-bedroom maisonettes.

The Council have reviewed the present trends for housing accommodation needs. Prior to 1939, the Council had provided a total of 140 dwellings, of which only ten were of the two-bedroom type, the remainder all having three bedrooms.

It is felt that many of the older houses are under-occupied and that some of the tenants would be prepared to move into smaller houses, whilst in many cases two-bedroom houses would meet the immediate needs of applicants on the Council's waiting lists. Furthermore, in view of existing high building costs, the cost of erecting such smaller houses would show an appreciable decrease in rent compared with three-bedroom houses.

In addition to the Cornish Unit maisonettes, the houses in course of construction include six two-bedroom houses of traditional type, and a further six houses of the same type are to be commenced in the immediate future (January 1950).

The Council's 1950 housing programme includes the erection of six more traditional two-bedroom houses and ten non-traditional (Unity) three-bedroom houses.

GRANTS UNDER HOUSING ACT, 1949.

(a) Conversion of buildings to dwellings .... Total £. Nil.

(b) Improvement of dwellings .... Total £. Nil.

N.B.—No applications received.

Houses Required.

In spite of the number of houses completed during the year, it is estimated that the total number of outstanding applications for housing accommodation at the end of the year amounted to approximately 300. It is not possible to give information as to the respective numbers of houses required (a) to replace unfit houses, (b) to abate overcrowding, and (c) to remedy sharing of accommodation, but from details given on the application forms and from information otherwise available a large proportion of the applications fall into categories (a) and (c).

During 1949, the tenants of two unfit houses were rehoused by the Council and the accommodation occupied by them has now been utilised—

(a)	Added to an adjoining premises as habitable accommodation	1
(b)	Added to an adjoining premises as outbuilding	1

12.—MINISTRY OF HEALTH INQUIRIES.

None.

13.—MILK AND DAIRIES.

(a)	Total number of registered dairy farms at 30–9–49	24
(b)	Total number of Retailers	7
(c)	Number of Producer-Retailers included in (b)	Nil.
(d)	Number of Supplementary licences issued to dealers whose premises are outside the Urban District	3

Designated Milks.

(1) Number of licences issued to use the designation :—

(i) Tuberculin Tested in respect of milk :

(a)	Bottled and retailed	2
(b)	Retailed only	1

(ii) Pasteurised in respect of milk (at 30–9–49) :

(a)	Pasteurised and retailed	Nil.
(b)	Retailed only	1

(iii)	No. of Heat Treatment plants not included in (ii) above	1
	No. of Heat Treatment plants authorised by M. of Food	1

14.—ICE CREAM.

No. of Premises Registered for

(a)	manufacture	2
(b)	Sale only	4

Samples.

No. of samples provisionally placed in Group I.	5
Ditto ditto ditto Group II.	3
Ditto ditto ditto Group III.	2
Ditto ditto ditto Group IV.	6
Total	16

15.—SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Number of licensed slaughterhouses	4
Number of registered slaughterhouses	Nil
Number of slaughterhouses in use where horses are slaughtered for human consumption	Nil

Names of any slaughterhouses in use under Ministry of Food :
C.W.S. Bacon Factory, Charlton Road, Shepton Mallet.

16.—RIVER POLLUTION.

Following the complaint to the Somerset County Council of alleged river pollution in the adjoining district (as reported for 1948) and attributed to effluents from the Urban District Council's sewage farm, further samples have been taken from time to time in conjunction with and by the officers of the County Health Department.

17.—KNACKERS YARDS.

Number registered in District .... Nil

18.—FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.

None.

THE FOLLOWING FACTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO ME BY THE SANITARY INSPECTOR :—

DETAILS OF SANITARY INSPECTIONS.

HOUSING.

INSPECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSES.

(1)	No. of houses inspected for defects under the Housing and P.H. Acts	77
	No. of inspections for the purpose	129
(2)	No. of houses (included above) which were inspected under Housing (Consolidated) Regulations	1
	No. of inspections for the purpose	2
(3)	No. of houses found to be unfit for human habitation	3
(4)	No. of houses, exclusive of those in (3) found not to be in all respects, etc.	33

REMEDY OF DEFECTS :—

No. of houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action	15

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS :—

(1) PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECS. 11 AND 13 OF HOUSING ACT, 1936.

(a)	No. of houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil
(b)	No. of houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	2

(2) PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTION 12, HOUSING ACT 1936.

(a)	No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	3
(b)	No. of ditto ditto in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the house or room having been made fit	Nil

HOUSING ACT, 1936. SECTION 9.

(a)	No. of houses in respect of which formal notices were served for repairs, etc.	Nil
(b)	No. of houses rendered in all respects fit as a result of such action	Nil
(c)	No. of houses in respect of which informal notices were served for repairs, etc.	Nil
(d)	No. of houses rendered in all respects fit as a result of such action	Nil

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936.

(a)	No. of houses in respect of which formal notices were served for repairs, etc.	1
(b)	No. of houses where unsatisafctory conditions were remedied as result of such action	1
(c)	No. of houses in respect of which informal notices were served for the abatement of nuisances and the execution of repairs	33
(d)	No. of houses in respect where defects were remedied or nuisances abated as a result of such action	21

3.—Housing Act, 1936. Part IV. Overcrowding.

(a) No. of houses overcrowded at the end of the year	7
(b) No. of new cases reported during year	6
(c) No. of cases relieved during year	2
(d) No. of persons concerned in such cases	20
(e) Particulars of any cases in which houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	Nil

4.—Requisitioned Premises.

(a) No. of houses inspected in connection with requisitioning	Nil
(b) No. of houses under requisitioned	
(i) At beginning of year	25
(ii) At end of year	24
(c) No. of houses requisitioned during year	Nil
(d) No. of houses released during year	1
(e) No. of inspections of requisitioned properties	55
(f) No. of family units accommodated at 31–12–49	31

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

No. of visits in connection with enquiries	2
Miscellaneous infectious disease visits	1
No. of visits in connection with disinfection	8
No. of rooms fumigated	8

DETAILS OF MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTIONS.

No. of visits and inspections of premises in connection with :—

Factories	12
Workshops	5
Other workplaces	2
Bakehouses	3
Schools	3
Drainage	70
Water Supply	26
Offensive Trades	6
Fried Fish Shops	3
Fishmongers	5
Butchers	12
Bakers and Confectioners	4
Grocers	18
Dairy Farms	11
Dairies and Milkshops	19
Food preparing premises	14
Ice-cream premises	29
Restaurants	3
Sundry food premises	8
Stables and Piggeries	2
Common Lodging Houses	Nil
Tents, Vans and Sheds	Nil
Smoke observations	6
Refuse collection	3
Refuse disposal	20
Defective sewers	7
Sewage disposal	41
Sundry housing visits	99
Sundry public health visits	59

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

(a) Details of Condemnations other than at Slaughterhouses.

Beef	324 lbs.	
Ham	10 lbs.	
Fresh fish (2 boxes)	11 stones.	
Dried milk powder	472 lbs.	
Haricot beans	614 lbs.	
Dried egg powder	¼ lb.	(1 packet).
Corned beef	193½ lbs.	63 tins.
Other meats and meat products	34½ lbs.	28 tins.
Fish and fish products	37 lbs.	42 tins.
Vegetables (various)	97 lbs.	56 tins.
Fruits (various)	9 lbs.	4 tins.
Jams and marmalade	6 lbs.	5 tins.
Condensed and evaporated milks	51 lbs.	56 tins.

(b) The following particulars relate to the period 3rd October to 31st December, 1949, during which time full meat inspection was carried out at the C.W.S. Bacon Factory.

No. of pigs slaughtered	7,285
No. of pigs inspected	7,285

Diseases other than Tuberculosis.

No. of whole carcases condemned	11
No. of carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	457
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	6.44%

Tuberculosis Only.

No. of whole carcases condemned	38
No. of carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	589
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	8.60%

(c) The following particulars relate to unsound meat at the C.W.S. Bacon Factory, during the whole year :—

Total number of pigs slaughtered :	26,190	
Disease conditions found :—	No.	Weight.
Whole carcases and organs	53	9,960 lbs.
Heads	2,753	38,532 lbs.
Plucks	1,753	13,104 lbs.
Steaks	109	107 lbs.
Part carcases	40	639 lbs.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION.

The Council continued the agreement whereby the investigation and, where requested by the owners or occupiers, treatment of infested premises were carried out by a servicing company. Five complaints were received during the year.

The control of infestation of the Council's refuse tips, sewers and sewage disposal works is dealt with by their own staff.

I have the honour to be, Miss Hill and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

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OR